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SUBJECT: GOF FULLY SUPPORTS OUR APPROACH ON SYRIAN-LEBANESE  
BORDER BLOCKAGE

REF: STATE 135904

Classified By: Political Counselor Paul Mailhot, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
) .

(C) We discussed the Syrian-Lebanese border blockage (reftel) July 22 with MFA desk officer for Syria/Lebanon Remy Bouallegue, who confirmed that the GoF fully agreed that Syrian blockage of the border constituted interference aimed at destabilizing Lebanon. Bouallegue noted France had toughened its public criticism of the border blockage and sought successfully to have a reference to the issue added to the recent EU General Affairs Council (GAERC) conclusions on Syria. He added that the GoF would continue to pursue the issue on the basis of the GAERC language, which called on Syria to contribute to regional stability. The GoF was approaching the UK EU Presidency and other EU members to encourage demarches on the issue to the Arab League, as well as to key Arab League members. While confirming that France would raise the issue with other Arab League capitals, Bouallegue stressed the importance of having the EU take a collective position and weigh in with the Arab League Secretary-General and other regional governments. He

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confirmed that the UK had already raised the issue in a recent human rights demarche to Damascus, and added that Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa's recent approach to the Syrians on the issue was too soft and needed to be toughened.

STAPLETON